BLACKTHORNE
INCORPORATED
PUBLISHING
No. 1
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LABOR FORCE
HURRY IT UP, TIME IS MONEY.
TOMORROW'S SUPERHEROES
DON'T THANK THEM . . . PAY THEM!

BEHIND THE SCENES

The **Labor Force** is a different sort of comic book. Let me tell you how a "different sort of comic book" is created.

As our story opens, David Ammerman, James D. Pascoe and Greg Swan all live in Phoenix, Arizona.

Swan and Pascoe are good friends. They contribute to amateur press associates together. They discuss philosophy together. They trade books with each other.

In 1981, Swan says goodbye to Pascoe and Phoenix. He heads for New York to pursue a career as a management consultant for a Big Eight accounting firm.

Ammerman and Pascoe are also good friends. They learn the philisophical, yet deadly, martial art of Kuk Sool Wan together. They clean carpets together. In 1984, they attend the San Francisco Academy of Art together.

Pascoe stays in San Francisco to continue his studies at the Academy of Art and to pursue a career in commercial art. Ammerman returns to Phoenix to concentrate on comic art.

But that's not where the story ends. In 1985, Ammerman, Pascoe and Swan all find themselves living in Phoenix once again.

To celebrate, they attend the San Diego Comic Art Convention. At the convention, they compare notes. Ammerman has been trying to break into the comics business with a vengence, as has Pascoe. They've both illustrated a story for an independent publisher. Swan is now a CPA, a CDP and writes reports for a living. He really wants to write comic books.

(continued on inside back cover)

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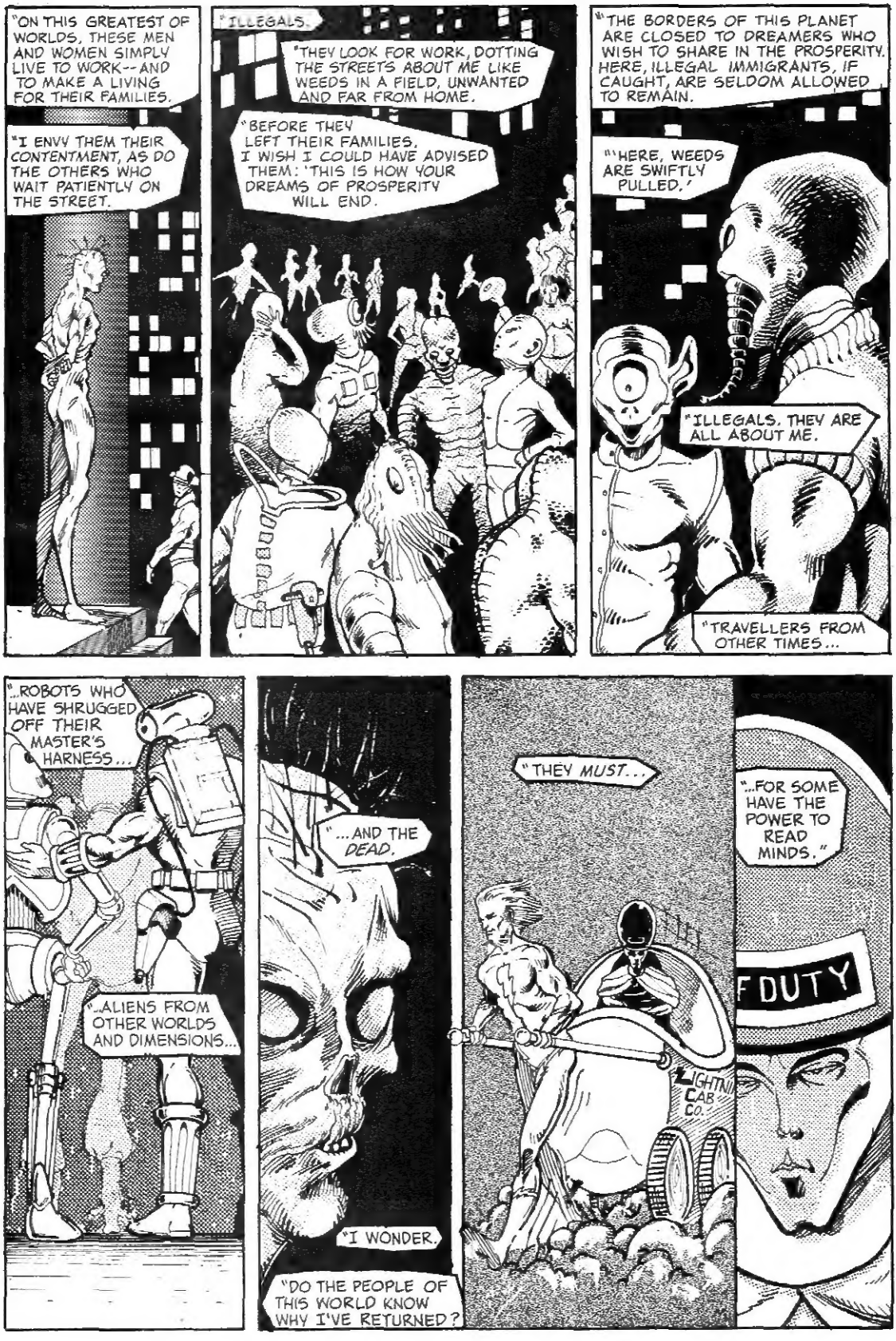
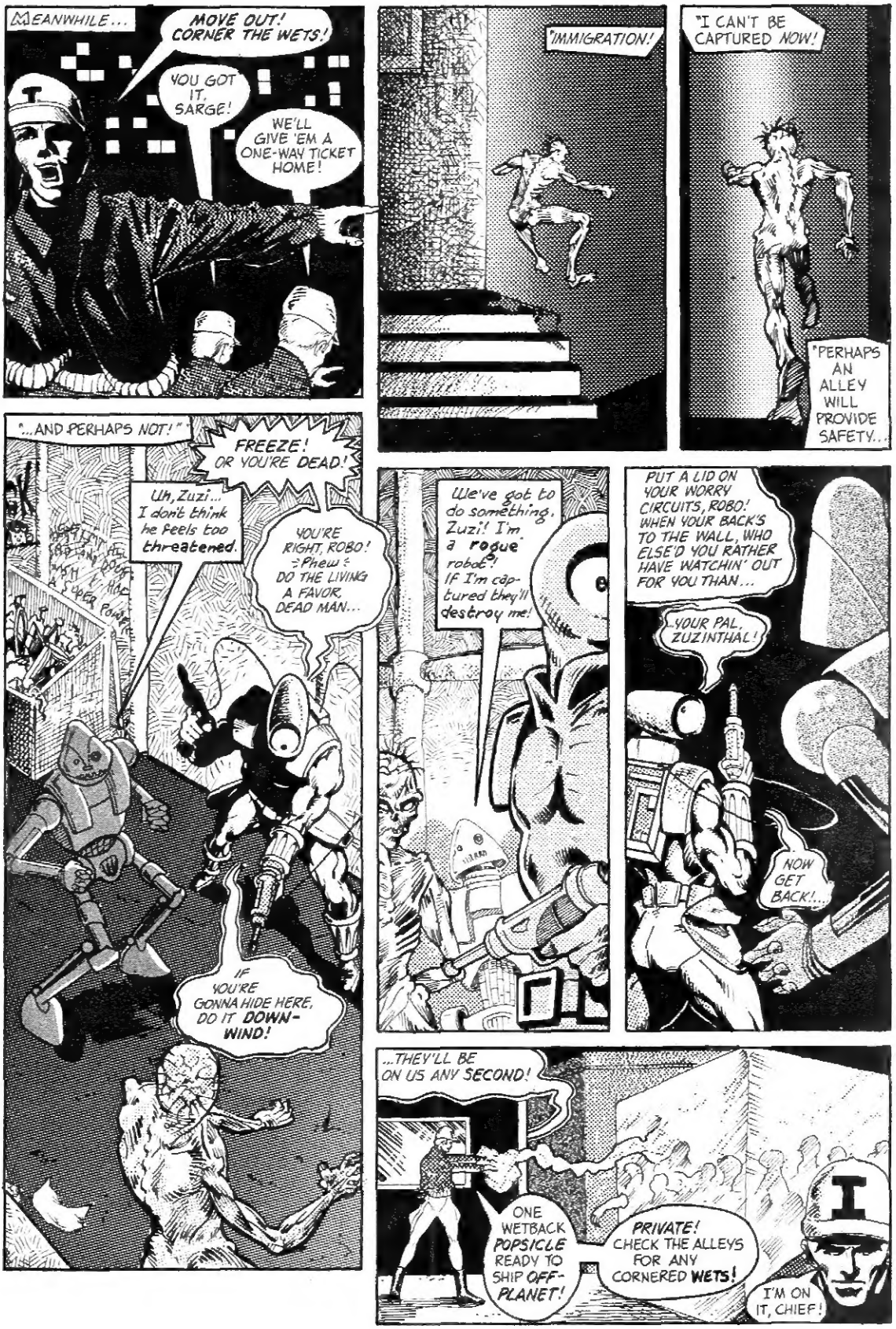
First printing

Printed in the U.S.A.

AIR-TRAN INC.
"I WONDER.
"HOW IS THE GREATNESS OF A MAN MEASURED?
"THROUGH HIS COURAGE?
"HIS SELFLESSNESS?
"BY COMPARISON TO THE STATURE OF OTHERS?
"I HAVE ARRIVED ONCE MORE ON THE WORLD OF GIANTS, WHERE ANY MAN SEEMS SOMEHOW SMALLER IN COMPARISON TO HIS FELLOWS.
"ALL AROUND ME ARE THOSE WHOSE POWERS AND ABILITIES COULD MAKE THEM GREAT MEN AND WOMEN, EVEN HEROES. BUT ONLY IN OTHER TIMES, OTHER PLACES.
"NOT HERE.
"HERE, THEY SIMPLY GO ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS.
FUSION RADIO AND OPTICAL


"ON THIS GREATEST OF WORLDS, THESE MEN AND WOMEN SIMPLY LIVE TO WORK--AND TO MAKE A LIVING FOR THEIR FAMILIES.
"I ENVY THEM THEIR CONTENTMENT, AS DO THE OTHERS WHO WAIT PATIENTLY ON THE STREET.
"ILLEGALS.
"THEY LOOK FOR WORK, DOTTING THE STREETS ABOUT ME LIKE WEEDS IN A FIELD, UNWANTED AND FAR FROM HOME.
"BEFORE THEY LEFT THEIR FAMILIES, I WISH I COULD HAVE ADVISED THEM: 'THIS IS HOW YOUR DREAMS OF PROSPERITY WILL END.
"THE BORDERS OF THIS PLANET ARE CLOSED TO DREAMERS WHO WISH TO SHARE IN THE PROSPERITY. HERE, ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, IF CAUGHT, ARE SELDOM ALLOWED TO REMAIN.
"'HERE, WEEDS ARE SWIFTLY PULLED.'
"ILLEGALS. THEY ARE ALL ABOUT ME.
"TRAVELLERS FROM OTHER TIMES...
"...ROBOTS WHO HAVE SHRUGGED OFF THEIR MASTER'S HARNESS...
"...ALIENS FROM OTHER WORLDS AND DIMENSIONS...
"...AND THE DEAD.
"I WONDER.
"DO THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD KNOW WHY I'VE RETURNED?
"THEY MUST...
"...FOR SOME HAVE THE POWER TO READ MINDS."
F DUTY
LIGHTNI CAB CO.

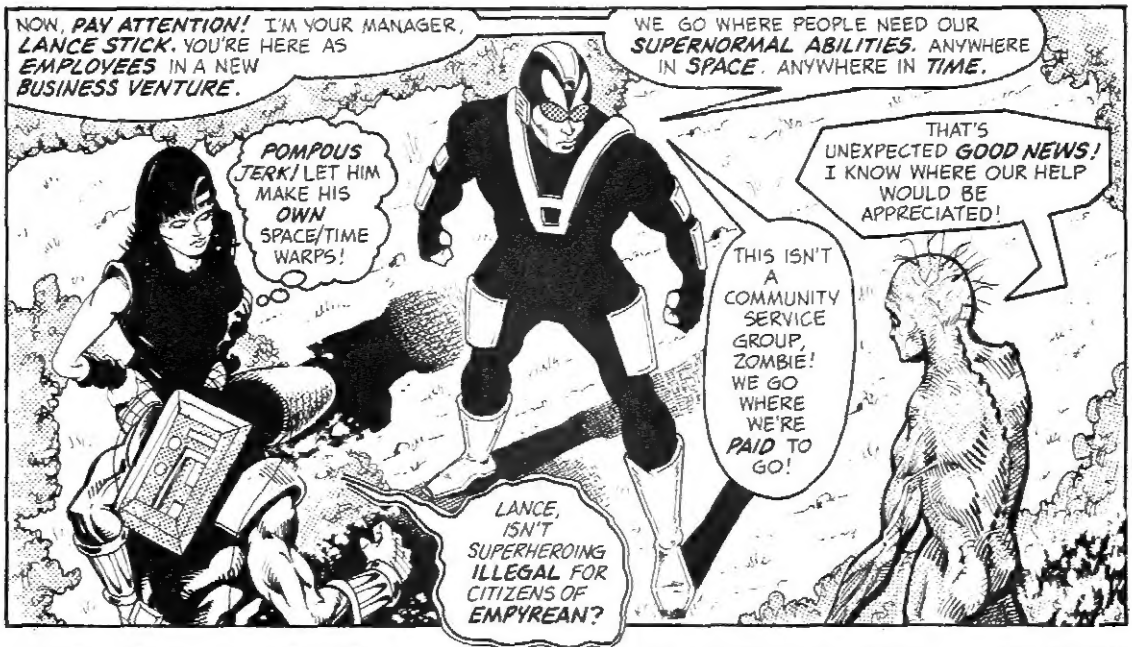

MEANWHILE...
MOVE OUT! CORNER THE WETS!
YOU GOT IT, SARGE!
WE'LL GIVE 'EM A ONE-WAY TICKET HOME!
"IMMIGRATION!
"I CAN'T BE CAPTURED NOW!
"PERHAPS AN ALLEY WILL PROVIDE SAFETY...
"...AND PERHAPS NOT!"
FREEZE! OR YOU'RE DEAD!
Uh, Zuzi... I don't think he feels too threatened.
YOU'RE RIGHT, ROBO! =Phew= DO THE LIVING A FAVOR, DEAD MAN...
IF YOU'RE GONNA HIDE HERE, DO IT DOWN-WIND!
We've got to do something, Zuzi! I'm a rogue robot! If I'm captured they'll destroy me!
PUT A LID ON YOUR WORRY CIRCUITS, ROBO! WHEN YOUR BACK'S TO THE WALL, WHO ELSE'D YOU RATHER HAVE WATCHIN' OUT FOR YOU THAN...
YOUR PAL, ZUZINTHAL!
NOW GET BACK!...
...THEY'LL BE ON US ANY SECOND!
ONE WETBACK POPSICLE READY TO SHIP OFF-PLANET!
PRIVATE! CHECK THE ALLEYS FOR ANY CORNERED WETS!
I'M ON IT, CHIEF!

BACK IN THE ALLEY, A BLINDING FORCE SIGNALS A NEW ARRIVAL...
ZZZAP!
HOWDY! IS THIS THE ALLEY OFF OF 423rd AND PALACE?
- DON'T LOOK SO STUNNED, BOYS I'M NOT WITH IMMIGRATION. I'M HERE ON BUSINESS.
IF YOU PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT, YOU CAN LEAVE WITH ME!
I NEED TWO OF YOU FOR A JOB. I DEFINITELY WANT THE ZOMBIE... AND I'LL CONSIDER ONE OF YOU TWO OTHERS.
LET'S SEE... WHICH ONE...
FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED!
GLURK!
I'LL PLAY ALONG TOO.
GREAT! IT'S DECIDED, THEN.
STEP INTO MY PARLOR...

MEANWHILE, FURTHER UP THE STREET, ORPHAN WALLY RICHARDS, PROUDLY WEARING THE UNIFORM OF DR. XERXES' BOARDING SCHOOL FOR BOYS, RUNS OFF FOR A WELL-DESERVED NIGHT OF FUN WITH HIS PALS...
I'LL BE BACK BY NINE. PROMISE!
IF YOU GET IN TROUBLE ONE MORE TIME, WALLY, DR. XERXES WILL HAVE HIS WAY WITH YOU!
OK, OK.
I LEARNED INVULNERABILITY TODAY! CAN'T WAIT TO SHOW THE GUYS!
MAYBE IF I JUMP OFF A BUILDING...THAT'LL SCARE THEM OUT OF THEIR SHORTS! I KNOW! I'LL THROW MYSELF IN FRONT OF A TAXI!
WHAT A HOOT! CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE LOOKS ON THEIR FACES--
OOOPS!
HEY KID!
GET BACK HERE YOU LITTLE FOOL!
WHATEVER IT WAS, I DIDN'T DO IT!
DR. XERXES' IS A HARD TASK MASTER. HIS WARDS CAN ILL AFFORD TROUBLE. WITH THIS IN MIND, WALLY DIVES HEADLONG INTO AN ALLEY...
HE JUMPS OVER A ROBOT, HARDLY NOTICING THE PITIFUL CREATURE SLUMPED AGAINST A WALL.
UNFORTUNATELY, IN HIS HEADLONG FLIGHT, THE GLOWING DOOR TO ANOTHER WORLD ALSO ESCAPES HIS NOTICE...
YIKES!

PRESENTING THE...
LABOR FORCE
CREATED BY: AMMERMAN, PASCOE and SWAN
"...BUT SOMEBODY'S GOT TO DO IT!"
WELCOME TO THE SPACE/TIME-STREAM, EVERYONE.
I'LL GO FIRST...
FIRST, LET'S ALL INTRODUCE OURSELVES. EVERYONE, GIVE YOUR NAME AND TELL US ALL A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF.
CLAIRE! WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!
SHUT OFF YOUR TIME WARP. WE DON'T WANT ANYONE JOINING US WHO DIDN'T RSVP.
BE PATIENT, BOSS. IT TAKES A MINUTE FOR WARPS TO COOL DOWN.
THAT COULD BE TROUBLE!
ONE-EYE! GUARD THE WARP!
HUH?
TOO LATE!
UMPH!
THUMK!
DAVID AMMERMAN --- ARTIST
JIM PASCOE --------- EMBELLISHER
GREG SWAN -------- PLOTTER/SCRIPTER
JOHN CLARK -------- LETTERER

NO WAY!
THEY TOLD ME, "FORM A SUPERHERO GROUP, LANCE."
I'M A MARKETING CONSULTANT BETWEEN JOBS, SO I TELL THEM, "NO PROBLEM. WHERE ARE THE CAPES?"
BUT I DRAW THE LINE HERE!
NO KID SIDEKICKS!
CLAIRE! SEND HIM BACK!
WARPS TAKE A MINUTE TO WARM UP.
THEN YOU BABYSIT HIM!


NOW, PAY ATTENTION! I'M YOUR MANAGER, LANCE STICK. YOU'RE HERE AS EMPLOYEES IN A NEW BUSINESS VENTURE.
POMPOUS JERK! LET HIM MAKE HIS OWN SPACE/TIME WARPS!
WE GO WHERE PEOPLE NEED OUR SUPERNORMAL ABILITIES. ANYWHERE IN SPACE. ANYWHERE IN TIME.
THAT'S UNEXPECTED GOOD NEWS! I KNOW WHERE OUR HELP WOULD BE APPRECIATED!
THIS ISN'T A COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUP, ZOMBIE! WE GO WHERE WE'RE PAID TO GO!
LANCE, ISN'T SUPERHEROING ILLEGAL FOR CITIZENS OF EMPYREAN?

NONE OF YOU ARE LEGAL CITIZENS OF EMPYREAN! WE JUST FOUND YOU THERE, ONE-EYE!
BESIDES, I'M AWARE OF THE GENERAL MORAL CHARACTER OF THE CITIZENS OF SLIMEWORLD...
WE CALL IT "BRIGHTSTAR."
... SLIMEWORLD!

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

WE'LL PRETEND WE'RE ALL PROFESSIONALS, HERE. IN THIS BUSINESS, CODENAMES ARE REQUIRED. I'VE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF CHOOSING ONE FOR EACH OF YOU AND PLACING THEM ON...
...YOUR BUSINESS CARDS!
WHERE DID THOSE COME FROM?
JUST ONE OF YOUR MANAGER'S MANY SUPERNORMAL ABILITIES!
NOW, ONE OF YOUR DUTIES AS A MEMBER OF THIS GROUP IS TO MARKET OUR SERVICES. MAKE BUSINESS CONTACTS WHENEVER POSSIBLE...
LABOR FORCE
JON MASLO -- operative
C. PYKE -- operative
...AND PASS YOUR CARDS OUT APPROPRIATELY. REMEMBER, NO WORK-- NO PAY!
STICK PROUDLY DISTRIBUTES THE CARDS...
SLIMEWORLD HUH?...
HE WANTS ME TO MIX AND MINGLE AND PASS OUT CARDS?
CLAIRE PYKE, TIME.
ZUZINTHAL, OUTLOOK.
JON MASLO, DEATH.
...AND BATTLE BOY!
...WHERE'S MINE?
CLAIRE!
IS YOUR WARP READY YET?
RRRROARRR!
MONSTER!

RROWR
SWAP!
HEAD FOR COVER!
CLAIRE SWORE THIS AREA OF THE SPACE-TIME STREAM WAS BENIGN!
YOU SAID WE WERE HEROES! HEROES DON'T RUN. THEY FIGHT!
TAKE MY ADVICE, KID HEROES GET ORGANIZED FIRST OR THEY GET KILLED!
I AGREE. I KNOW.
OUTLOOK! GET AWAY! NO GRANDSTANDING!
IT'S INDESTRUCTABLE!
KRUNK!
HELP MEEEEEEEEE
THEY NEED HELP! I'M GOIN'!
STAY PUT!
WE'VE GOT TO CUT OUR LOSSES!

I'VE LEARNED SUPER-STRENGTH! I'LL STOP IT!
...AND SO THE LEADER IS WITHOUT FO-LOWERS
LOOK AT ME, GUYS! I CAN LIFT IT!
AARGH!
THUD!
WHAT BASTARD WOULD BRING A SURDU BEAST INTO THE STREAM?
THOSE BEASTS CAN RAVAGE WORLDS!
MUST BUILD A WARP.
...'N THE MEANTIME, SOMEONE MUST HOLD OFF THE BEAST SO I CAN FREE OUTLOOK AND WE CAN GET AWAY.
...AND FOR THAT WE NEED A PINCH HITTER WHICH ONLY TIME MAY PROVIDE.
KORD, I AM TRULY SORRY.

I'VE LOST CONTROL OF THE SITUATION.
DEATH, USE YOUR POWER ON THE BEAST!
I'LL GET TIME AND THE BOY.
I WILL TRY; WILL YOU?
MY POWER IS KNOWLEDGE. BY SELECTIVELY PROJECTING MY MILLENIA OF EXPERIENCE, ACCUMULATED BOTH WHILE LIVING AND WHILE DEAD, I CAN CHANGE MINDS.
...BUT WHAT GOOD IS MY ABILITY WHEN APPLIED AGAINST A BEAST THAT HAS NO MIND TO CHANGE?
CLAIRE!
I KNEW 'TWAS YOU!
I AM HERE.
KORD!
WHEN MY WARP APPEARED, YOU WERE FOUR HOURS FROM DEATH AT THE HANDS OF A TAVERN WHORE...
...AND HER HIDDEN DAGGER.
...PERHAPS YOU WILL PREFER THIS DEATH.
A DEMON!
RUN! I WILL DISPATCH THE BEAST!
...AND WHEN I AM DONE...

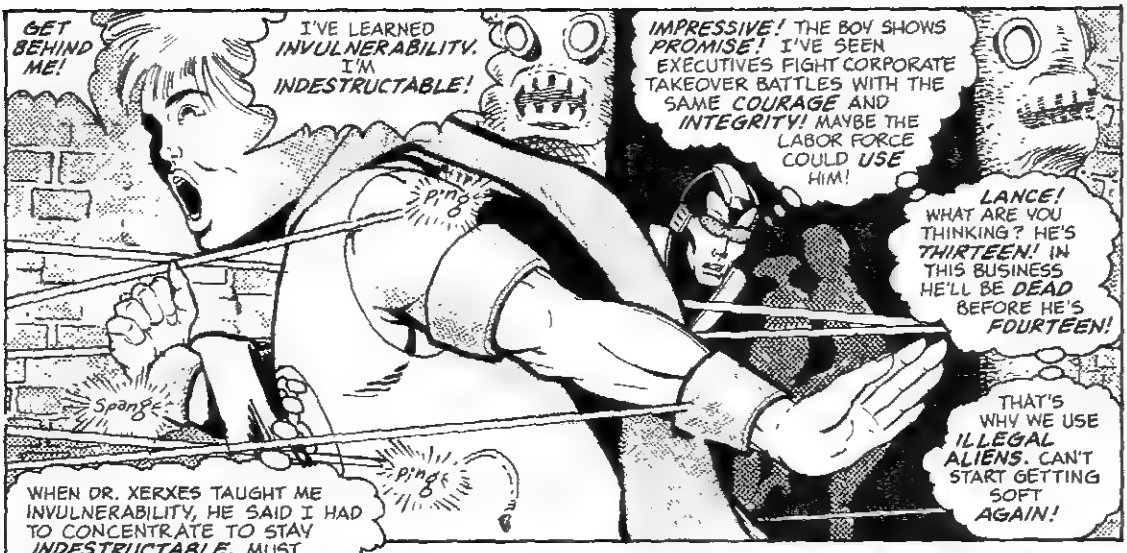
...I WILL KNOW THY SWEET SMILE AGAIN!
I'M FREE!
GOOD LUCK.
CLAIRE, LET'S GO!
WITH YOUR ABILITIES, WHY DIDN'T YOU HELP?
YES, LET'S GO!
WE CAN'T RUN! MR STICK, WHY ARE WE RUNNING?
BOY, MY CODENAME IS "MENTOR," NOT "MR STICK."
...AND MY JOB HERE IS TO LEAD AND GIVE ADVICE, NOT FIGHT.
IF YOU PEOPLE HAD FOLLOWED MY ADVICE INSTEAD OF RUNNING AROUND PLAYING SUPERHEROES, THIS WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED.
WELL, WHAT ARE YOU STANDING AROUND FOR? WE'RE IN A HURRY!
MOVE OUT!
C'MON, BATTLE BOY, WE NEED TO GO.

AND WHAT OF POOR ROBO, CRUELLY LEFT IN THE ALLEY BY ZUZINTHAL...
WHERE DID THAT CRAZY KID GO? DOESN'T HE KNOW THERE'S A RAID GOIN' DOWN? HE COULD GET HURT! MY KIDS WOULD NEVER--
WHAT'S THIS?
A ROGUE ROBOT!
Don't hurt me sir. I surrender.
STAY WHERE YOU ARE OR YOU'LL LAUGH UNTIL YOU DROP!
MY POWER TO MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH UNTIL THEY'RE SENSELESS IS GREAT FOR CROWD CONTROL--IF THE CROWD IS LIVING BEINGS. BUT A ROGUE ROBOT? I'VE GOT PROBLEMS...
MAN IN TROUBLE!
I NEED BACKUP!
...I just want to go back to cleaning urinals at the teleportation station.
The work was so fulfilling! I left the urinals so shiny! People seemed to enjoy being in my restrooms.
Really.. I'm a good robot
Wh-- what happened?
They're gone!
I know them by heart!
ZZZ

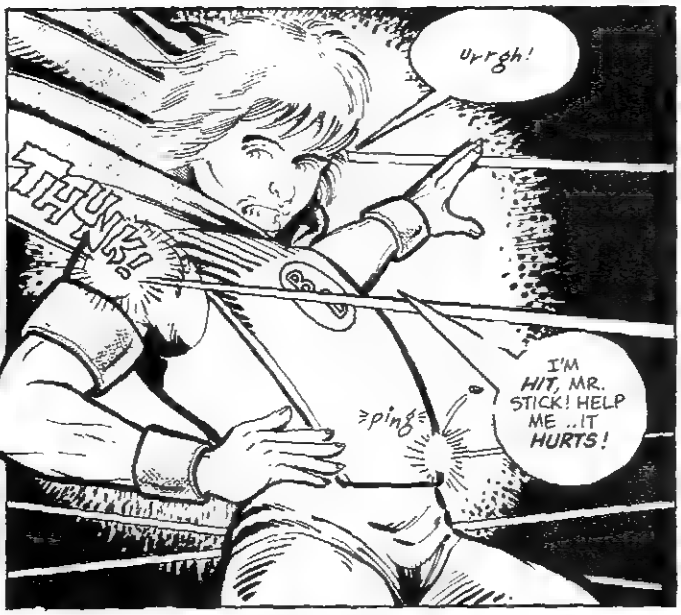
WE REJOIN THE LABOR FORCE IN THE SPACE/TIME STREAM AS THEY CONTINUE TO DEMONSTRATE THE BETTER PART OF VALOR...
CLAIRE! NO STOPPING!
WE MUST! WE CAN'T KEEP RUNNING THIS WAY!
CLAIRE'S RIGHT! I'M TOO POOPED TO PLIXATE! FIRST, I'M A CHEW TOY FOR A BIG PUPPY! THEN I RUN A ZECA-THON! ANYWHERE ELSE, I'D BE ON THE INJURED RESERVE LIST!
AND THIS SALIVA IS STICKY! I HATE STICKY!
CARE TO TRADE PLACES WITH THE ROBOT YOU LEFT FOR IMMIGRATION TO DESTROY?
THE 'BOT DOESN'T KNOW IT, BUT HE'S GOT MOVES OF HIS OWN. HE CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF. BESIDES, CLAIRE CAN--
--CLAIRE CAN WHAT? WARP TIME SO WE CAN RETURN TO SAVE THE ROBOT? DO YOU THINK IT'S SO SIMPLE? WELL, I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YOU. TO RETURN TO THAT TIME, WE'VE GOT TO GO PAST THE SURDU. CARE TO GO AN-OTHER ROUND WITH YOUR PUPPY?
AND ANOTHER THING-- SURDUS ARE INTELLIGENT. IF HE DIDN'T SWALLOW YOU, IT WAS FOR A REASON! BE GLAD YOU DIDN'T STICK AROUND TO FIND OUT WHY!
YEAH, YEAH! ANY-ONE FOR A BREWSKI?
A BREWSKI! ...HERE?
WHY NOT HERE? WHY ELSE DO YOU THINK I CARRY THIS UTILITY PACK AROUND? IT'S A SIX-PACKER!
OUTLOOK! DON'T SIT DOWN! WE'VE GOT TO GO!
YOU JUST SAID WE HAD TO STOP! LADY, YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND FASTER THAN A TRAFFIC MONITOR!
I STOPPED BECAUSE A DARK AREA IS DEAD AHEAD, NOT SO YOU CAN HAVE A BREWSKI!
NO ONE KNOWS THE STREAM LIKE I DO. IT'S A REFLEC-TION OF THE AREAS OF TIME AND SPACE WHICH IT SPANS. DARK AREAS ARE BAD PLACES AND THEY LEAD TO WORSE!
I'D ARGUE WITH A SURDU BEAST BE-FORE I'D GET NEAR A DARK AREA, MUCH LESS HOLD A COMPANY PICNIC TEN FEET AWAY FROM ONE!

THANKFULLY, A WARP INTERRUPTS CLAIRE'S ELOQUENT DIATRIBE...
ZZZAAAP!
BREAK'S OVER!
LET'S GO, HEROES!
I GIVE UP!
LAST ONE THROUGH IS A GREEN PIG!
THEY HAVE NO IDEA OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MARKETING TO A HEALTHY BUSINESS! I CAN SEE MOST OF THAT BURDEN WILL FALL TO ME!
ONE THING I'VE LEARNED AS A MARKETING CONSULTANT IS...
..YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN OR WHERE YOU CAN MAKE A SALE!
LABOR FORCE HEROES INC.
"Anywhere, Anytime"
PRESS BUTTON FOR SERVICE
L. Stick – manager-in-charge
PPAZZ

AT THE OTHER END OF CLAIRE'S WARP, THE LABOR FORCE STUMBLES ONTO THE WAR-RAVAGED WORLD OF YLLET...
K-POW
KATA-KOW!
ZZZZAP!
RATATATATAT
BLAM
CLAIRE'S MADE A GRAVE ERROR!
SHE'S PLACED US IN THE MIDDLE OF BATTLE!
FIND COVER QUICKLY! NO EXCUSES!
WHOA!
WATCH OUT BADGUYS! THE LABOR FORCE IS HERE!
GOOD JOB, BATTLE BOY! IF THEY DIDN'T HEAR US WARP IN, NOW THEY KNOW FOR SURE WHERE TO AIM THEIR GUNS!


GET BEHIND ME!
I'VE LEARNED INVULNERABILITY. I'M INDESTRUCTABLE!
IMPRESSIVE! THE BOY SHOWS PROMISE! I'VE SEEN EXECUTIVES FIGHT CORPORATE TAKEOVER BATTLES WITH THE SAME COURAGE AND INTEGRITY! MAYBE THE LABOR FORCE COULD USE HIM!
LANCE! WHAT ARE YOU THINKING? HE'S THIRTEEN! IN THIS BUSINESS HE'LL BE DEAD BEFORE HE'S FOURTEEN!
THAT'S WHY WE USE ILLEGAL ALIENS. CAN'T START GETTING SOFT AGAIN!
ping
Spang
ping
WHEN DR. XERXES TAUGHT ME INVULNERABILITY, HE SAID I HAD TO CONCENTRATE TO STAY INDESTRUCTABLE. MUST THINK INVULNERABLE!

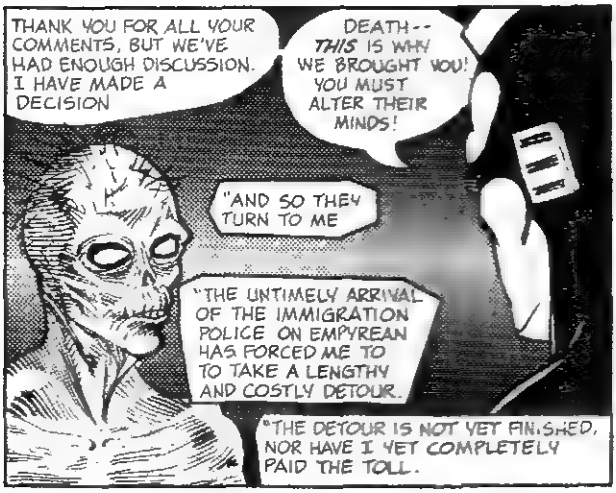
MR. STICK! SEE--I CAN STOP BULLETS!
MR. STICK! WHERE DID YOU GO? IS EVERYONE SAFE?


Urrgh!
THUNK!
ping
I'M HIT, MR. STICK! HELP ME ..IT HURTS!

I SAID "NO EXCUSES," BATTLEBOY...

...GET BEHIND COVER, NOW!
SMACK!
BLAM!

NOW PAY ATTENTION! WE HAVE A JOB TO DO. OUR MISSION IS SIMPLE: STOP THIS WAR!
I BELIEVE IN THE VALUE OF GROUP DECISION MAKING. IF THE MEMBERS OF A GROUP PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO SUPPORT THE RESULTING DECISION.
LET'S ALL TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO DISCUSS OUR ALTERNATIVES. THE FLOOR IS OPEN!
KRAK!
BUDDA BUDDA!
MENTOR, WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THIS WAR?
THESE PEOPLE ARE KILLING EACH OTHER, DEATH--DOES IT MATTER WHY?
OBVIOUSLY TO THEM, TO ME.
IF YOU INSIST, WE ARE INTERVENING IN A FIGHT BETWEEN CRACK GOVERNMENT TROOPS AND ILL-EQUIPED, ILL-TRAINED WOMEN. THEY FIGHT OVER AN ISSUE THEY CALL "COMPARABLE WORTH." THE WOMEN DESIRE "EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK."
SPLAT!
SPLACK!
...THE GOVERNMENT FIGHTS FOR THE STATUS QUO...
AND TO WHICH SIDE DO WE THROW OUR MIGHT?
YEAH, WHAT SIDE ARE WE ON?
THE ANSWER IS EASY. THE GOVERNMENT HAS PAID US.
..BUT YOU TAKE OUR DISCUSSION OFF-TRACK, DEATH. THE LONGER YOU DELAY OUR DECISION AS TO A COURSE OF ACTION, THE MORE PEOPLE YOU ALLOW TO DIE!
LANCE NEVER LOSES AN ARGUMENT.
SPLAK!
. LET'S SHOOT THE WOMEN! I USED TO KILL SWAMP RATS BACK HOME ON BRIGHTSTAR! WITH MY SHARP-SHOOTIN' EYE, I NEVER MISSED. NEVER!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUGGESTION, OUTLOOK, HOWEVER, THERE'S BEEN ENOUGH SHOOTING!
BRRRATATAT!
I'LL WARP THE POOR WOMEN TO THE SPACE/TIME STREAM. WITHIN MONTHS WE CAN FORGE THEM INTO A SUPERIOR FIGHTING UNIT!
WRONG SIDE, TIME.
BESIDES, CAN YOU CREATE YOUR WARP IN HUNDREDS OF PLACES AT ONCE? THE FIGHTING GRIPS THE ENTIRE CITY, NOT JUST THIS STREET!


THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR COMMENTS, BUT WE'VE HAD ENOUGH DISCUSSION. I HAVE MADE A DECISION
DEATH-- THIS IS WHY WE BROUGHT YOU! YOU MUST ALTER THEIR MINDS!
"AND SO THEY TURN TO ME
"THE UNTIMELY ARRIVAL OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICE ON EMPYREAN HAS FORCED ME TO TO TAKE A LENGTHY AND COSTLY DETOUR.
"THE DETOUR IS NOT YET FINISHED, NOR HAVE I YET COMPLETELY PAID THE TOLL.

"FOR NOW I HAVE JOINED THE LABOR FORCE I WILL SIDE WITH THEM IN THEIR BATTLE.

"I AM THE SHEPHERD.
"THE WOMEN OF YLLET. . THEY ARE MY ERRANT SHEEP.
"I PREPARE MYSELF TO USHER THEM BACK INTO THE FOLD... TO REESTABLISH YLLET'S STATUS QUO.
I AM THE SHEPHERD.
"I RETRACE MY CENTURIES OF LIFE EXPERIENCE AND COLLECT THOSE MEMORIES WHICH SUIT MY PURPOSE. I HANG THESE MEMORIES UP FOR MY FLOCK TO SEE, LIKE PICTURES IN A GALLERY...
"LOOK UPON THEM, WOMEN OF YLLET!
"COMPARE YOUR LIFE OF WAR AND DISCONTENT WITH THEIRS OF TRANQUILITY AND PEACE.
"I AM YOUR SHEPHERD.
"TODAY, THE WAR IS OVER."

AFTERMATH
QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOUR WAR IS OVER?
IF YOU'RE A REBEL, YOU WONDER HOW IT STARTED, AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHO WILL STRAIGHTEN UP THE MESS?
IF YOU'RE BATTLE-BOY, YOU PUZZLE OVER THE OUTCOME. WHERE WAS THE BIG BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL? HOW CAN IT BE OVER SO QUICKLY? WHO WERE THE GOOD GUYS?
.. AND IF YOU'RE GENERAL FRANKUS, COMMANDER OF THE GOVERNMENT FORCES, A GRIN SETTLES ON YOUR TOAD-LIKE FACE --
--AND YOU ADVANCE TO PAY THE HEROES WHO HAVE BROUGHT PEACE TO YOUR WORLD.
FREE ENTERPRISE HAS ONCE AGAIN SPREAD ITS WINGS IN TRIUMPH OVER OUR FAIR WORLD OF YLLET! MENTOR, PLEASE ACCEPT THIS CASK OF GOLD AS A TOKEN OF OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED TODAY!
I THANK YOU, SOLDIERS! FROM MY HEART I THANK YOU!
I HUMBLY ACCEPT.
FOR MYSELF AND, MY TEAM, GENERAL, I MAY SAY IT HAS BEEN INTERESTING SERVING YOU--
PARDON ME.
I JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU.... EVERYONE SEEMS SO MUCH HAPPIER, NOW. I NEVER WANT TO ROCK THE BOAT AGAIN....BUT, SOMEHOW...
...IT STILL MAKES SENSE TO BE PAID WHAT YOU'RE WORTH.

WE OF THE LABOR FORCE SYMPATHIZE WITH YOUR PLIGHT, MA'AM.
ACCEPT MY BUSINESS CARD.
IF YOU EVER AGAIN FEEL MORE STRONGLY ABOUT EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK, DON'T TAKE THE LAW INTO YOUR OWN HANDS...
...CALL THE LABOR FORCE! WE'D ONLY BE TOO GLAD TO HELP.
IN THE SPACE/TIME STREAM, OUR HEROES CONGRATULATE THEMSELVES ON A JOB DONE...
ON THE WHOLE, YOUR PERFORMANCE ON YLLET LEFT MUCH TO BE DESIRED.
ANY COMMENTS ON THE COMPLETE LACK OF COMMON SENSE EXHIBITED BY MOST OF YOU?
I HAVE ONE COMMENT ONLY. WE MUST RETURN TO EMPYREAN.
FORGET IT, JON! AFTER WHAT YOU DID TO THOSE POOR WOMEN ON YLLET, I'LL NEVER TRUST YOU AGAIN! WHAT YOU DID WAS WORSE THAN PHYSICAL RAPE! YOU VIOLATED THEIR MINDS!
WE GO TO EMPYREAN OR GO ELSEWHERE DEPENDING ON THE WISHES OF THE GROUP! YOU CAN GO TO HELL!
WE MUST RETURN.
DON'T TRY YOUR MIND TRICKS ON ME! RETURNING TO EMPYREAN REQUIRES RETURNING TO THE TERRITORY HELD BY THE SURDU BEAST!
EACH POINT IN THE STREAM PROVIDES A DOOR TO A SINGLE PLACE AND TIME. TO RETURN TO EMPYREAN, WE MUST RETURN TO THE SAME POINT WE ENTERED, AND THAT MEANS TAKING OUR CHANCES WITH THE SURDU!
ONE MAN HAS ALREADY DIED SO WE COULD ESCAPE THE BEAST! I RECOMMEND WE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO EMPYREAN!

ENOUGH! I'M IN CHARGE, HERE, I MAKE THE DECISIONS!
WE WILL ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO EMPYREAN. THE BEAST HAS LIKELY MOVED ON.
I'LL TAKE THE CHANCE ON RETURNING TO EMPYREAN, IF IT'S YOU WHO'S ASKING, LANCE.
THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY TO ACCOMPLISH AN OBJECTIVE.
THE LABOR FORCE TRAVELS SILENTLY TO THE SITE OF KORD'S LAST STAND AGAINST THE FEROCIOUS SURDU BEAST. THERE, A WARP IS BUILT TO RETURN THEM TO GLORIOUS EMPYREAN...
WHERE DID THE BEAST GO? WHAT HAPPENED TO KORD? THERE WASN'T EVEN A ... BODY. SURDU'S DON'T EAT THEIR ENEMIES. THEY'RE HERBIVOROUS.
CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER. FIRST THE BEAST SOMEHOW APPEARS IN THE STREAM AND NOW THIS MYSTERY! SOMETHING IS DEFINITELY WRONG!
WE'RE HOME, MRS. PYKE SMELL THOSE BURGERS COOKIN'? LET'S EAT!
YOU WILL EAT. SOON ENOUGH, BATTLEBOY. FOR NOW, I SUGGEST WE LOCATE THE ROBOT.
THE ZOMBIE'S CORRECT. IF ROBO'S AS POWERFUL AS OUTLOOK CLAIMS, HE COULD BE OF VALUE. BESIDES, BATTLEBOY, I'LL BUY ORGANOBURGERS FOR EVERYONE WHEN WE'RE DONE!
PUB
MR. MIKE'S
EATS
BATTLEBOY'S EYES LIGHT UP: "YAY! MR. STICK, YOU'RE OK!"
OH NO! IF WE FIND ROBO, HE MAY BE PEEVED AT ME FOR LEAVING HIM IN THE ALLEY! AND IF ROBO GETS MAD, IT'S BYE-BYE FOR MAMA'S BOY, ZUZINTHAL!
IT'S BEEN FUN, GUYS, BUT BIGGER AND BETTER THINGS ARE CALLIN' ME! NO NEED TO PAY ME, EITHER. I'D JUST FRITTER AWAY THE CASH ON BEER AND WOMEN! ALL I NEED IS THANKS FOR A JOB WELL DONE!
THANKS, OUTLOOK!
NO BIG LOSS!
SEE YA!
SHOULD YOU NOT RECON-SIDER, OUTLOOK?
YOU'RE... RIGHT...
I... SHOULD... RECON-SIDER..

ROBO STAGGERS OUT FROM THE ALLEY WHERE ZUZINTHAL LEFT HIM....
WHA--!
HEY ROBO!
LONG TIME, NO SEE! I'VE BEEN WORRYING MYSELF SICK SINCE YOU TRIPPED AND FELL IN THE ALLEY!
BY THE WAY, SORRY I RAN OUT ON YOU. YOU WOULDN'T BE ANGRY AT ME FOR A LITTLE THING LIKE THAT...
...WOULD YOU?
Zuzi! Where did you go? are you okay?
TERRIFIC!
HALLELUJAH! HE'S NOT MAD!
COME ON! I'VE GOT SOME NEW FRIENDS I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET!
It's good to be with Friends!
They sure need to dust their light fixtures! ..they need a better janitor!
the Bheehr of Champions
schomp! GOOD ORGANO-BURGER. schoff! CAN I HAVE TWO MORE, MR STICK?
AMAZING HOW THE CHEF COHERES THESE BURGERS OUT OF ORGANIC MOLECULES IN OLD NEWSPAPERS! WANT A FRY, JON?
I AM BEYOND SUSTENANCE, CLAIRE PYKE.
...58...59...60 GOLD BARS!
HEY! WHERE DO I SIT?
FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS... LET'S DIVVY UP!
I'LL TAKE MY FEE, PLUS EXPENSES-- INCLUDING THE RESTAURANT BILL!
YOU MAY SPLIT UP THE REST AS YOU SEE FIT.
I'LL TAKE MINE NOW! BACK IN A FLASH, JACK!
MORE MONEY IS NEEDED.
I WILL WAIT.

A SIGNAL ON MY EARPHONE-- WE'VE GOT A NEW JOB!
BZZ BZZ
FIVE OPERATIVES ARE AUTHORIZED. SINCE ZUZINTHAL HAS FOOLISHLY RUN OFF, WE WILL INCLUDE THE ROBOT.
CLAIRE, WE'RE WARPING BACK TO THE STREAM, NOW!
ZZAP!
HE SAID FIVE OPERATIVES... LESSEE... 1... 2... 3... 4... ALL RIGHT! I'M IN!
HURRY IT UP, PEOPLE! TIME IS MONEY!
SECONDS LATER...
GUYS, I'M BACK! LOOK AT THE GREAT NEW SUIT I COPPED FOR FIVE GOLD BARS! IT'S GOT A ROCKET PACK! IT'S GOT MISSILES! IT'S..
...GUYS?
WHERE'D THEY GO?
HEY, WAIT FOR YOUR BUDDY, ZUZINTHAL!
PING
KUARRR!
SPUTTER
COUGH
MEANWHILE, IN THE RESTAURANT MEN'S ROOM...
THE IMMIGRATION SERVICE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SAFE DUTY... BUT MY BROTHER AND TWO OTHER GUYS ARE MISSING IN ACTION FROM TODAY'S RAID!
DAMN WETS! WHY DON'T THEY STAY AT HOME WHERE THEY BELONG...
ZZZAP!
THAT NOISE! WHAT'S...
GOING ON
THE LINGERING WARP CATCHES THE IMMIGRATION MAN!

OUR HEROES TRAVEL THROUGH THE WARP TO EMERGE IN...
A DARK AREA!
L...LANCE! WE'RE IN DEADLY DANGER!
OF COURSE YOU ARE!
YOU'VE KIDNAPPED A FEDERAL OFFICIAL! THAT'S A CAPITAL OFFENSE! I WANT SOME EXPLANATIONS OR YOU'LL LAUGH UNTIL YOU DIE...HORRIBLY! IF NECESSARY I WILL EXECUTE YOU NOW!... THAT'S THE LAW!
Look around us, guys! What do we do?
DAMN! WE'RE REALLY IN TROUBLE! WE'VE GOT SEVEN OPERATIVES FOR THIS JOB WHEN ONLY FIVE WERE AUTHORIZED!
WHAT WILL THE LABOR FORCE DO? BE WITH US NEXT ISSUE FOR...
EVERYTHING MERGES WITH THE NIGHT!

BLACKTHORNE PUBLISHING, INC.

PRESENTS

CROW OF THE BEAR CLAN

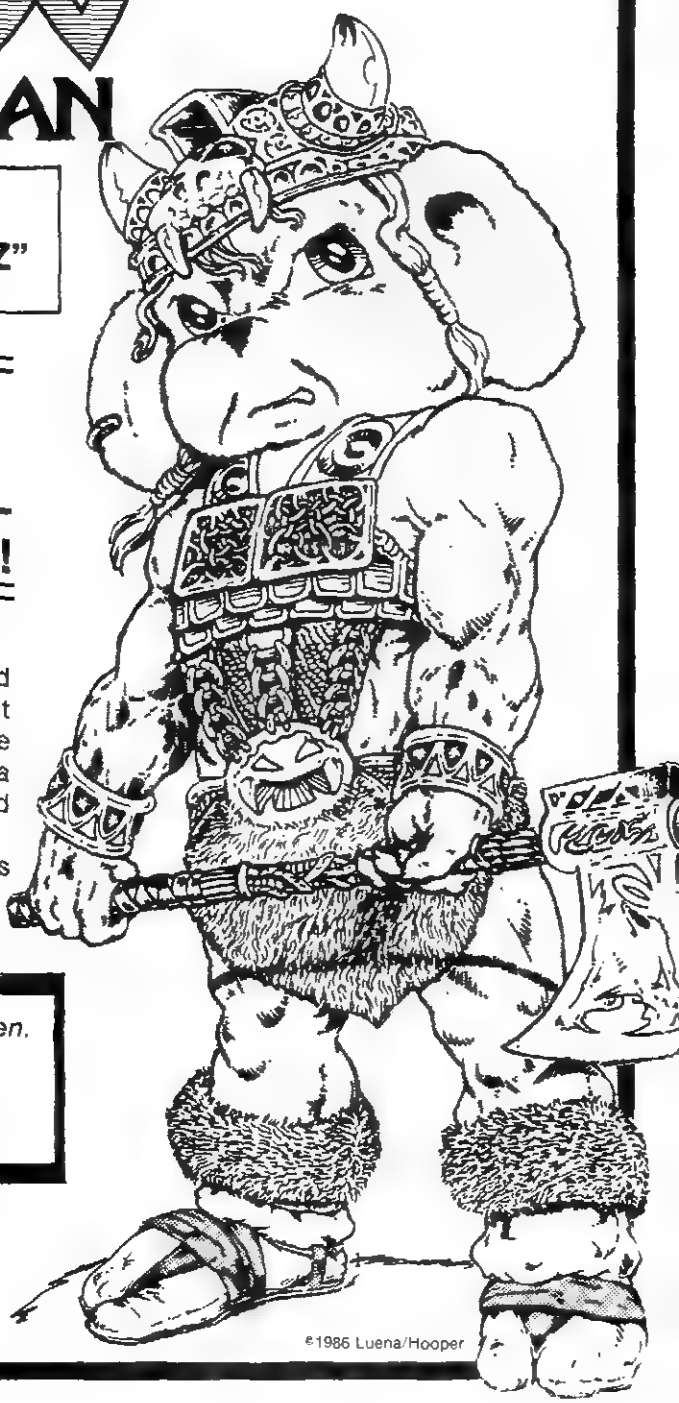
ISSUE NUMBER ONE:
"ESCAPE FROM SAURAZ"

NEW From the Creators of the "Teddies", a bi-monthly B&W Comic!

CROW the Teddy, is abducted from his woodland home and thrust into a world of reptilian regime. He fights to free himself and his world of a terrible dynasty full of inquisitions and injustice!

Come along and discover CROW's world as he struggles to remain free.

Created by Ed Luena & Mike Haden.
Pencilled by Ed Luena,
Written by Mike Haden,
Inked by Ken Hooper.



CROW OF THE BEARCLAN #1 — 32 pages, black and white, bi-monthly, full color laser-scanned covers. **$1.50**

©1986 Luena/Hooper

LANCE STICK, MENTOR

Lance Stick is the manager-in-charge of the LABOR FORCE team. Unlike the leaders of other super-hero groups who lead their groups through charisma, ability, and consent of the other members, Lance is in charge because a corporate executive put him in charge. Lance, a marketing consultant by trade, is a charlatan with no super-normal abilities, although he cleverly conceals this fact from the rest of the group. It's difficult to tell if Lance contributes anything. If he does, it's his ability to market *and to sell new work. He has* a "bottom line" orientation to every obstacle or opportunity which presents itself. Consequently, he accepts any client willing to pay for LABOR FORCE services. Lance DOES NOT have a heart of gold.

BLACKTHORNE PUBLISHING, INC.

PRESENTS

LAFFIN' GAS

#2

IN THIS ISSUE WE PARODY A FAMOUS CRIMEFIGHTER IN:

DARK LIGHT:

A Third Less Heroic Than Regular Superheroes.

Joining top creative talents FRED HEMBECK and HAL LANE are a host of up and coming young talents.

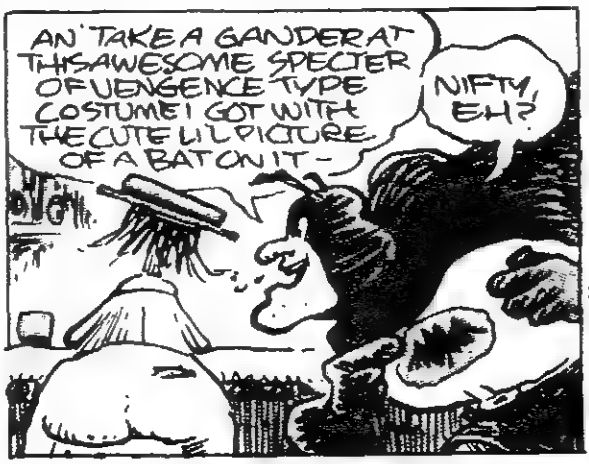
DON CHIN and CHRIS PARSONAVICH of *"Hamster"* fame collaborate to bring us a completely different type of hero in: *"YE DARK KNIGHT RETURNETH."*

CLIFF MacGILLIVRAY *(3-D Heroes)* and DAVE GARCIA *(Panda Khan)* are teamed again in the light-hearted *"DARK NIGHTIE."*

Talented WILLIAM VAN HORN *(Nervous Rex)* makes his *LAFFIN' GAS* debut with the hilarious *"DORK NYTE."*

Regular contributor and cover artist ANDREW ICE writes and draws *"BATH KNIGHT."*

DON'T MISS THIS SIDE-SPLITTING ISSUE!!!



©1986 William Van Horn

"Dark Nightie" ©1986 MacGillivray & Garcia

LAFFIN' GAS #2, "Dark Light", 32 hilarious B&W pages, with full color laser-scanned covers, Bi-monthly. **$2.00**

CLAIRE PYKE, TIME

Claire, a time-traveller, has the ability to create warps into and out of the Space/Time Stream (a gateway to anywhere in space or time). Without her sometimes grudging cooperation, the LABOR FORCE could easily find itself stranded far away from *home. A female Hemingway man* (our interpretation of Hemingway), she is a romantic with low self-esteem. Her travels through time have given her a unique perspective on life: it ends. She regularly requests aid from her acquaintances throughout space and time, *often with dire consequences for* the acquaintance. This situation does not bother Claire. Her "friends" are able to die or sustain grave injury in support of valuable causes. In Claire's mind, the deaths her "friends" would otherwise encounter, such as old-age or accidents, would have little purpose. Soon, she will find that her friends do not share her view of life and death.

BLACKTHORNE PUBLISHING, INC.

PRESENTS

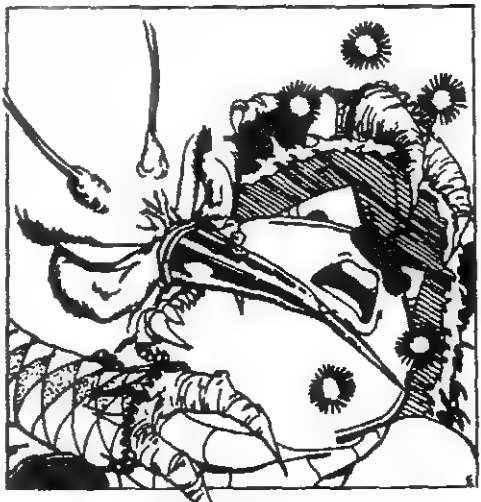
HAMSTER VICE

3rd *HOT* ISSUE ! ! !

Written & Illustrated by DWAYNE FERGUSON!

A dream turns into a nightmare for HAMMY as the POW'R RETURNS. The VICE take on Queen Mosquita and her band of VAMPIRE MOSQUITOS in *"OCTOBER FEAST, Part 1"*

In a story that could only take place in South Carolina, the VICE are up against incredible odds in a *full scale SWAMP BATTLE!*



HAMSTER VICE #3 — 32 pages, black and white, bi-monthly (Hamster Vice goes monthly with issue #4), full color laser-scanned covers. **$2.00**

ZUZINTHAL, OUTLOOK

Zuzinthal is an alien emigree who came to Empyrean to find the promised land. Prey to fads and "get superpowers quick" schemes, Zuzi is unreliable but likeable. His upbringing on the world he calls "Brightstar" (everyone else calls it "Slimeworld") was as secure as that of a modern-day boy in war-torn Central America. As a result, despite his somewhat irreverent exterior, Zuzinthal trusts no one and will always be sure to "get his." Zuzi's super-powers are based on whatever "simulation" machines he can afford to purchase and what is currently "in" on the world of Empyrean.

BLACKTHORNE PUBLISHING, INC.

PRESENTS

HAMSTER VICE 3-D No. 1

"ZOMBIE QUEST"

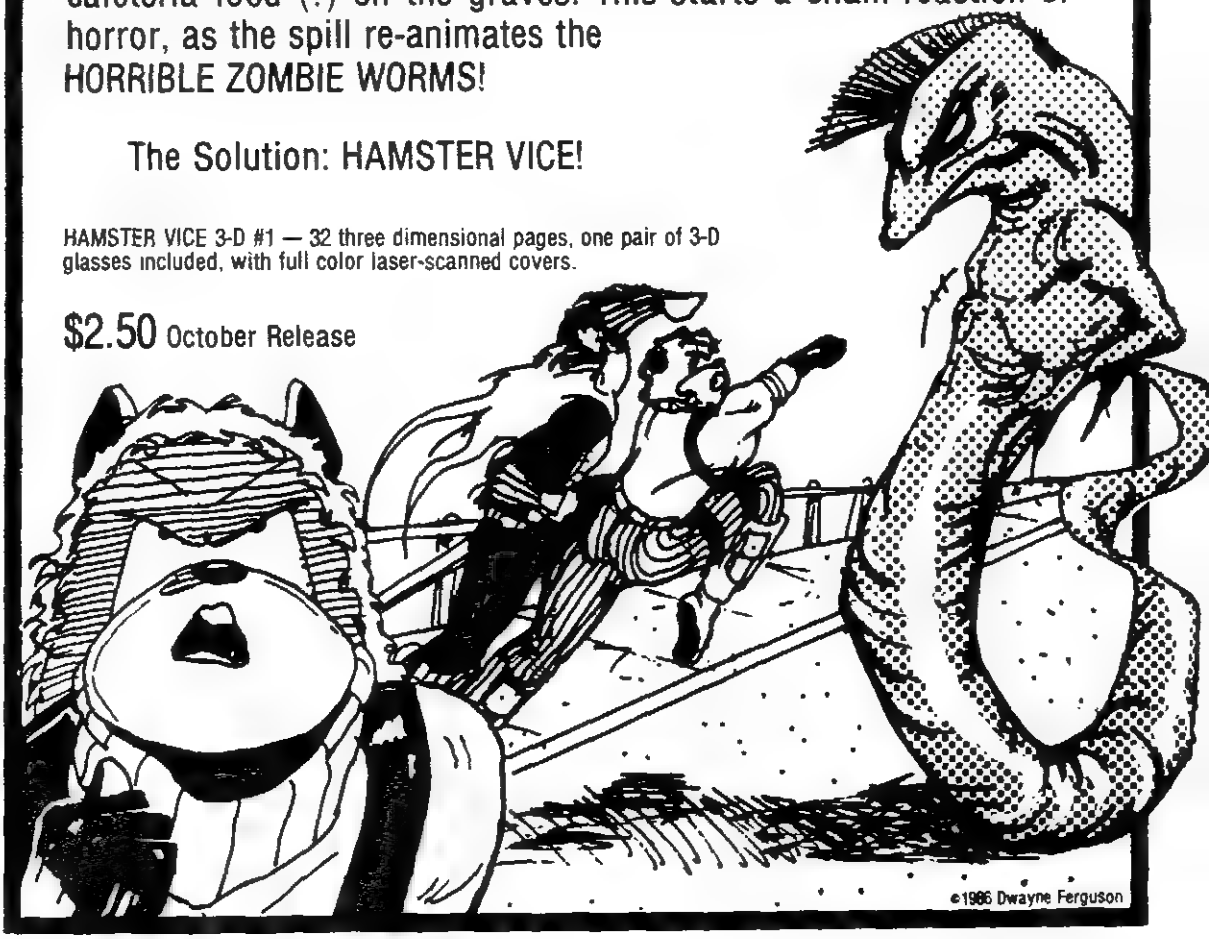
Our HOTTEST comic now comes in it's own 3-D Line!

The problem: A group of college students take a short cut through the SWAMP INDIGO Cemetery and accidentally spill cafeteria food (?) on the graves. This starts a chain reaction of horror, as the spill re-animates the HORRIBLE ZOMBIE WORMS!

The Solution: HAMSTER VICE!

HAMSTER VICE 3-D #1 — 32 three dimensional pages, one pair of 3-D glasses included, with full color laser-scanned covers.

$2.50 October Release



©1986 Dwayne Ferguson

BEHIND THE SCENES continued

Swan suggests the best way to break into the business is to try to give people what they want (He really said, "we must target a market," but what do you expect from a management consultant?) On the last day of the convention, all three make a pact. They will form a creative team and stay put in Phoenix long enough to create a comic book.

Swan drives home. He cogitates and meditates. The world likes super-heroes and the creative team likes super-heroes. The creative team also likes originality. But there's one problem. Is there anything original left to do with super-heroes? Surely, there are so many new super-heroes appearing in comic books that in a hundred years every character in comics will be a super-hero. Swan says "Ah-ha!" Our comic will take place in the future, in a society where everyone is a superhero. Including the mailman. Including the President. Everyone.

Pascoe is a spontaneous creative talent and in two hours on the floor of a bare apartment, he and Swan flesh out the concept. It will contain humor. It will be published in black and white. It will feature stories with three-dimensional characters. Surely, that's what the "target market" — readers of independently published comics — would want.

Ammerman is also a spontaneous creative talent and in two days he creates a dozen brilliant character sketches. The creative team chooses six of the drawings.

Swan is a methodical, careful creative talent. He takes two weeks to create the personalities of the characters and define their worlds . . . and the project begins. Swan will write. Ammerman will draw. Pascoe will ink.

But who will letter? Enter John Clark, an editor at Another Rainbow. Clark is also a freelance comic book letterer, one of the best in the business. The creative team shows Clark the concept and character sketches. Clark is excited. The creative team points out that they will be unable to pay him for close to a year, and then only if the book sells. Clark coughs and sputters, but agrees to pitch in.

For seven months the creative team meets weekly, creating and refining the **Labor Force** and eating snacks. Today you read the result.

Yes, it's a different sort of comic book. Mostly because it was created with you, the comic book reader, in mind. Partly because we enjoy doing it. And partly because of "found objects." But that's a story for another day . . .

Thanks for buying the **Labor Force**. We'll be seeing you in sixty days. Until then, send letters and let us know how we did.

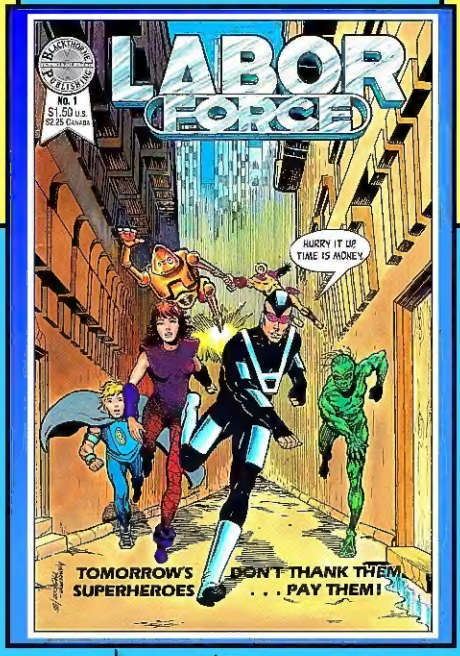
Greg Swan
President
Labor Force, Inc.

A postscript: Where is the creative team today? Ammerman is a full time comic book artist. Pascoe has returned to the San Francisco Academy of Art. Swan is a college professor, textbook author and freelance writer. Clark has even greater editorial responsibility at Another Rainbow.

BLACKTHORNE Comics

Holy Shinola!! It's **DCP!!!!**

BLACKTHORNE PUBLISHING INCORPORATED
No. 1
$1.50 U.S.
$2.25 CANADA
BORED
Comboy
TOMORROW'S SUPERHEROES
DON'T THANK 'EM
. . . PAY 'EM!!



Labor Force #1

September 1986

Blackthorne Publishing

"But Somebody's Got To Do It"

artist: David Ammerman embellisher: Jim Pascoe plotter/scripter: Greg Swan

letterer: John Clark

1st issue

1st app. Labor Force (Mentor, Time, Outlook, Death & Battle Boy)

1st app. Robo